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Watson's Art Journal.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, MAR. 14, 1868.

PUBLICATION OFFICE, CLINTON HALL, ASTOR PLACE, where all communications should be addressed, and where subscriptions and advertisements will be received.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND OTHERS.—We shall be pleased to receive information from all parts of the country, on the active progress of the Arts of Music and Painting. We will pay especial attention to such information, and will duly chronicle all facts of interest. We invite all to communicate with us, with the assurance that such correspondence will meet with prompt and courteous consideration.

OLE BULL'S CONCERTS.

This distinguished violinist who has witch-ed the world with his noble instrument for nearly half a century, returns here next week after a triumphant tour of ten weeks through the West. Had Ole Bull been a hero returning after some great conquest, the ovations could hardly have been greater than those which were tendered him in the Western cities. Torch-light processions awaited him at the various railway stations, serenades at the hotels, and complimentary addresses awaited him at the various places on his route. These were not empty ovations, they were genuine demonstrations of respect and esteem, for he is remembered lovingly through the West, and the people thronged his concerts to see Ole Bull, but they remained to hear him, for all felt that he was a greater artist than ever, and that his playing was more than ever inspired.

While every other musical organization has failed, Ole Bull has made a remarkable money success, clearing in a few weeks many thousands of dollars. In some places he was compelled to give two concerts the same day, for the reason that people for miles round had poured into the town to hear the great violinist, and found every ticket sold to the inhabitants of the place. Coming so far their disappointment was great, so to relieve it, a concert was improvised in the afternoon, and at one place four hundred dollars were taken from those who could not get a ticket for the evening.

A reception so brilliant Ole Bull could hardly have hoped for, and its spontaneousness must have gratified him deeply, proving, as it did, that tradition had embalmed the reputation which he earned so long ago, and had preserved a popularity which was second to that of no artist who ever visited the country. By the public he was everywhere received with acclamation, so that each appearance was an ovation. But, if the public welcomed him cordially, the press was not a whit behind in its enthusiastic recognition of his artistic efforts. Our endorsement, given after having heard him several times in private, prepared our critical friends in the West for what they were to hear, and they found that our remarks were all just, and that our giant Norseman had renewed his youth, and was grander and purer in his style, while still preserving his wonderful technique, than at either of his former visits, the first dating back nearly a quarter of a century.

The following criticism from a Chicago

journal is a sample of the written opinions of all the papers of the West, and indicates the impression which Ole Bull's playing made upon all who heard him:

"The grand, fascinating element of Ole Bull's playing is his identification of his own personality, in all its varied wealth of resource, with his instrument. The instrument is but his longer arm, his more supple fingers, his all-assimilating imagination, and lively, charming fancy, his depth of human feeling and inspired reach of human thought—all made vocal as if, by a more than human tongue, voiceful with airs of Paradise. With all previous violinists—even Vieuxtemps—the phrase, 'the violin speaks,' seems far-fetched and empty. There is a deep gulf between the reality and it. But in Ole Bull's hands the violin does literally speak—not, of course, in articulate words, but no less potently and intelligibly and inspiringly, in the inarticulate language of passion and sentiment and cunning art, which voices our heart's profoundest thoughts, most ardent imaginings and deepest feelings, and repeats to us with something more than an echo of sound of nature and song of bird. This is what he does. How he does it would lead us too far; and quite uselessly, into the trite realm of the technical; and after we had told all,—by what art every trill and run, every speaking melody and rich harmony was effected,—neither we nor our readers would know any more about it than before. Do we ask how heaven's breezes blow? No; we cannot tell whence they come, nor whither they go. Do we ask how the running brook is voiceful, and how singing bird is nature's executant? No; we are content to hear and enjoy. No sooner should we think of telling how Ole Bull produces his effects; nor should we any more think of criticising them than of criticising Æolian murmurs, ripple of running waters, or carol of bird. These are all simply above criticism, as being out of its domain. All that water or bird or breeze can do, it does; all that string and bow and sounding board can do, they do in Ole Bull's hands.

"Then, separating in thought the instrument from the performance, what a personality is that which stands at the back of the instrument, and creates a soul under the ribs of death! The man is 'great with' the instrument; but he is also greater than it. When you once come to know him—his manliness, his tenderness, his graciousness—what possibilities, beyond and greater than mere art, but in which true art is involved, do you find! And how, still separating instrument from performer, does he for the moment lavish all these upon and infuse them all into his violin. He looks upon it as though he loves it, and it returned love with equal love. His eyes half closed, half in ecstasy, half in watchfulness, he yields to it, and he commands it. The melody which he creates enraptures him; and from hence comes inspiration for diviner strains."

Ole Bull gives his first Concert at Steinway Hall on Wednesday evening next, the 18th instant, assisted by his concert company, Madame Varian Hoffman, Mr. Ignace Pollak, and Mr. Edward Hoffman. His second Concert will take place on the following Friday, and his last will be a matinee, on Saturday morning the 21st, also at Steinway Hall. We need not advise our readers to attend, for we believe that the announcement alone is sufficient to crowd the Hall on each occasion.

CONCERT OF THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

The New York Philharmonic Society gave the fourth concert of the twenty-sixth season, at the Academy of Music, on Saturday evening last. It was a cheering sight to all lovers of the true and beautiful in art, to see the crowded and brilliant audience assembled on this occasion. The Academy was literally crowded to the very roof, and high up in the family circle could be found the very elite of the city, who willingly suffered the eclipse of their superb toilettes for the sake of listening to the sublime strains of the masters of the musical art. There were special pilgrims to our great musical shrine, from Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Connecticut, Jersey, and up the river; a tribute to the perfection of our Philharmonic Orchestra, highly flattering, certainly, but only a just tribute and nothing more. Such audiences as have attended the concerts of the Philharmonic this year, make us hope that, notwithstanding the vastly increased expenses, the pecuniary result will equal that of any preceding year.

The programme of the fourth concert was as follows:

PART I.

Symphony in G minor, Mozart: 1. Allegro Molto. 2. Andante. 3. Minuetto and Trio. 4. Finale—Allegro assai.

Scena ed Aria, from the Opera "Oberon," Weber: "Ocean thou Mighty Monster!" (Ocean du' Ungeheuer.) Madame Parepa-Rosa.

PART II.

Introduction to "Lohengrin." Wagner. Aria—"Deh vieni," "Nozze di Figaro," Mozart. Madame Parepa-Rosa.

Symphony, in A major, Op. 30, Mendelssohn: 1. Allegro Vivace. 2. Andante con Moto. 3. Scherzo con moto moderato. 4. Saltarello—Presto.

Overwhelmed as we have been of late with the massive and almost melo-dramatic music of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, it is refreshing to the soul to listen to the pure, spontaneous, unadulterated musical thoughts of Mozart. They are clear, bright and sparkling as the purling brook from the fountain head, and are truly human in their sentiment and tender pathos. In an orchestral point of view, they are models for all time; models for the refined and characteristic treatment of all classes of instruments—a treatment which develops the subject, however complicated, with a clearness which is perfectly individual, while at the same time the coloring, by the most simple means, invests the whole with a halo of exquisite fancy, and delicate and brilliant imaginings. We do not need to speak of the merits of the G minor symphony, for its beauty is recognized by all lovers of music; but of its performance by our splendid Philharmonic Orchestra, we might utter a column of praise. Dealing with dainty materials, most daintily did the orchestra do its work. We never heard finer shading; the violins were as one instrument in the hands of a great master, so fine was the phrasing, so delicate and true the execution and the intonation. It was a perfect luxury to listen to the rich tide of violin sound, so full and swelling, yet so softened and refined in its largeness. Equal honor is due to all the other instruments. The spirit of generous rivalry to excel, seemed to animate the entire band, and, guided by their capable leader, their efforts resulted in a per-